



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

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**COPY**

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Department of Genetics  
(415) 497-5052

Dr. Kenneth Newell  
Division of Strengthening of Health Services  
World Health Organization  
1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland

Dear Dr. Newell,

This letter is to introduce the name of Mr. David Werner, Director of Project Piaxtla. Mr. Werner's work has been primarily in a remote section of western Mexico but he has a home base in the Palo Alto area and has become very well known and deeply respected for the work he has been doing for the improvement of health in Las Barrancas. I am enclosing a brief description of his program and can attest to its sincerity and many reports of its effectiveness from my medical colleagues who have cooperated with him and give their testimony from firsthand experience. I hope you will already have had a copy of his handbook, *Donde No Hay Doctor*, which I believe to be an excellent prototype for this type of publication. I am sure you will have no difficulty in getting a copy by return mail from Mr. Werner if this is not already in the WHO library.

David has achieved a considerable following of interested students on the Stanford campus, some of whom have undertaken special workshop field projects in the context of our undergraduate academic program in Human Biology. I have accepted the role of sponsor for one of these students who is helping Mr. Werner in the preparation of an application for a more comprehensive study of the role of indigenous health workers. They had intended to submit this application to a number of foundations for support.

When Miss Lynn Coen, the student in question, brought this to my attention, I of course immediately recognized it was likely to overlap the very extensive efforts that were mentioned as being furthered by your division in the most recent report of the Director General. So, it seemed to me that it would be of very great benefit and maximum efficiency all the way around to bring you together in some fashion for further discussion of the present status of your own efforts and to take the most careful account of this in what they might do. This is hardly a competitive enterprise and I would certainly recommend Mr. Werner to you as a source of very substantial experience and insight in these problems and a person on whom you might well wish to call for advice on certain aspects of it.

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As you may know, I will be visiting WHO during the first two weeks in December for some further work in connection with ACMR business and I hope this may give us an opportunity for some more intimate discussion of these issues. Meanwhile I would appreciate it on Mr. Werner's behalf to be able to initiate a dialogue involving them and yourself and to learn if possible the current status of the development of the registry of "Health by the People" efforts in which I know that you and Dr. Mahler are so deeply interested.

In response to some of Dr. Mahler's ehortations at the last ACMR meeting I am trying to spend some time in getting a better analytical insight into issues like cost effectiveness and priority setting for work on rural health in the developing countries. Mr. Werner gave me the attached bibliography. I would be interested to know what actions you would recommend to add to that reading list or your comments on the cardinal items in it.

Of course, I have read with very deep interest the volume on "Health by the People" and the cognate UNICEF report that I received at the last ACMR meeting. It is difficult for me to know how to make a critical and objective evaluation of some of the claims that are presented there.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr

cc: Mr. D. Werner  
Miss Coen ✓